

# Conference on Disarmament

25 February 2014

English

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## Final record of the one thousand three hundred and seventh plenary meeting


Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 25 February 2014, at 10.20 a.m.

*President:* Mr. Vinicio Mati .....(Italy)

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**The President:** I call to order the 1307th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Before opening the list of speakers for today's meeting, I would like to give you an update on the recent developments. As you are already aware, I am continuing along the same path as the previous President towards the implementation of the so-called dual-track approach.

On the first track, we have intensified our efforts for the renewal of the mandate of the informal working group. As you know, the first non-paper circulated by the previous President, based on the wording of the decision adopted by consensus last year, gave rise to a number of amendments, one of which was considered unacceptable by one member State. The controversial point was the reference to document CD/1864, which contains the programme of work adopted in 2009.

In order to try to accommodate these two different approaches, an informal meeting took place yesterday afternoon. During the discussions it clearly emerged that there was a common will to have the informal working group re-established and to get the Conference back to work as soon as possible, including in order to meet the general expectations expressed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the entire membership of the Conference. Different views were expressed on the merits of including a reference to document CD/1864, but finally agreement was reached.

Consequently, I am in a position to announce that, taking into consideration the time requested for processing documents by the secretariat, a draft decision will be circulated by the end of this week for adoption next week. The exact timing will depend on the schedule of meetings during the high-level segment.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my warmest appreciation to all delegations involved in these consultations for the constructive spirit and high degree of flexibility shown. I consider the result of this exercise an encouraging signal for our ongoing work at the current session.

As to the second track, we extended an invitation to the regional groups in order to illustrate the proposals to them. In this vein, I would like to confirm my willingness to illustrate the proposals to the regional groups as soon as possible and ask that regional groups indicate the names of the coordinators and their preferences on the topics to be attributed to the coordinators. This presentation will be made under my responsibility as current President. However, I will be accompanied by the other five Presidents of the 2014 session as a show of the continuity among our rotating presidency. I wish to clarify that the proposal on the table is nothing more than a set of options presented to the regional groups for their comments.

As soon as the names are made known, the six Presidents will meet with the coordinators to decide collectively on the attribution of specific topics to each of them, taking into account the preferences expressed by the regional groups, and on the other details of the schedule of activities. The entire process will be conducted by the presidency with the other five Presidents and the coordinators in full transparency. This is the current state of affairs.

I now turn to the list of speakers for today. The following delegations have requested to take the floor: Brazil and Iraq.

I give the floor to the representative of Brazil, Ambassador Pedro Motta Pinto Coelho.

**Mr. Motta Pinto Coelho (Brazil):** Mr. President, let me begin by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I am fully confident that your wisdom, diplomatic skills and experience will help us guide the work of the Conference in a productive and efficient manner. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation as you lead the work of the Conference.

Last week, at the beginning of your presidency, I listened attentively to the statements made by the Ambassadors of Cuba and Venezuela. They both provided us with a

useful overview of the second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, which took place in Havana last January.

I also heard with great interest the report presented by the Ambassador of Mexico on the results of the second international Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons. The Nayarit conference reinforced the perception that urgent action is needed in order to prevent a global humanitarian catastrophe, which would result from any nuclear detonation, accidental or deliberate.

Brazil believes it is high time to declare both the use and the possession of nuclear weapons as unacceptable. A comprehensive assessment of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons could only confirm that these weapons are illegitimate and therefore should be outlawed and ultimately eliminated.

In this context, we welcome the announcement by the Government of Austria of its intention to hold a third International Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons later this year, including substantive participation by civil society.

Latin American and Caribbean States have a long tradition of active participation in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. In fact, we have been pioneers in this regard. The establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in our region in 1968 inspired other regions of the world to establish similar zones. The Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), created as a result of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, is the only institutionalized mechanism of a nuclear-weapon-free zone, and it has been leading efforts to reinforce political coordination with other zones in order to promote progress in the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation agenda.

The same spirit of cooperation and commitment to the goals of disarmament and non-proliferation prevails in the context of the Union of South American Nations. All its member States are parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

South America is, therefore, a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction.

At the Havana summit, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States adopted a special declaration on nuclear disarmament, which emphasizes their intention to work as a region to ensure adequate implementation of United Nations General Assembly resolution 68/32, on the follow-up to the Assembly's 2013 high-level meeting on nuclear disarmament.

In resolution 68/32, as we know, the General Assembly called for the urgent commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament for the early conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer and use or threat of use, and to provide for their destruction.

The experience of the Treaty of Tlatelolco and other nuclear-weapon-free zones worldwide has demonstrated that it is possible to live safely without nuclear weapons, as long as countries acknowledge that peace and cooperation are goals to be pursued above all other considerations.

As we strive to adopt a programme of work and start a new round of discussions on ways to advance the nuclear disarmament agenda, it is my hope that the political will displayed by Latin American and Caribbean States could serve as an inspiration to all States possessing nuclear weapons.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Brazil for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Iraq, Ambassador Mohammad Sabir Ismail.

**Mr. Ismail (Iraq):** Mr. President, first of all, let me congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. We are sure of your ability to take the work of the Conference forward in order to overcome the stalemate that this forum has witnessed over the past years. I also would like to take this opportunity, since this is my

first statement this year, to congratulate Mr. Michael Møller on his appointment as the Acting Secretary-General of this forum.

The Iraqi Government believes in respecting and implementing the non-proliferation and disarmament treaties and conventions. It also reiterates its respect of international instruments that are related to disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. For these reasons, Iraq has acceded to the Biological and Chemical Weapons Conventions as well as to the Anti-Personnel Landmines Convention.

In 2012, my country ratified the Additional Protocol related to the Safeguards Agreement of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and last year it ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

We believe the Conference on Disarmament is the sole multilateral forum that deals with disarmament issues. This Conference is going through a very critical time. This is why member States have to redouble their efforts to reach an agreement on a comprehensive and balanced programme of work that deals with all concerns in accordance with the rules and procedures of the Conference and to reach agreement as it did in the past, so as to accomplish progress that will remind us of days gone by when the Conference made landmark achievements.

The issue of nuclear disarmament should remain at the top of the agenda of the Conference's priorities, in accordance with the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in 1978, taking into consideration the International Court of Justice advisory opinion on the legality of the threat of use of nuclear weapons in 1996. The destructive nature of these weapons makes eliminating them an essential element for the survival of humankind. The continuing existence of nuclear weapons is a threat to international peace and security. Therefore, my Government emphasizes the need to start negotiations on a phased programme for the total elimination of nuclear weapons within a specific time frame and to conclude a convention to achieve this goal.

Retaining large arsenals of nuclear weapons and developing new types of such weapons, including different means of delivery, is for us a great cause of concern. Therefore, we have to agree on the necessity of reaching an international binding convention to assure the non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and to identify the necessary steps to achieve this goal. Although negative security assurances are considered vital and important for non-nuclear-weapon States and are considered as a justified demand due to the fact that these States gave up the nuclear weapons option, it cannot in any way be considered as an alternative to the goal of total disarmament of nuclear weapons. The continuing production of fissile material is a danger to the non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament process.

My country supports the effort made to establish an international and effective non-discriminatory multilateral treaty to ban the production of fissile material that is used to produce nuclear weapons and other explosive materials.

Iraq considers outer space as the common heritage of all humankind and that it should be explored for peaceful purposes only. Its militarization therefore could trigger an arms race, but it is the responsibility of the Conference to establish an international instrument to prevent the militarization of outer space.

My country supports the expansion of membership of this multilateral conference and the appointment of a special coordinator for that process, taking into consideration the fact that any country may become a member as part of such expansion. We hope steps will be taken towards expanding the Conference membership so as to stimulate this negotiating body by bringing in new ideas and enhancing transparency.

My country reiterates its support for establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones as a crucial step towards eliminating nuclear weapons. Therefore, it has supported and participated in the efforts which have been made for establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in different geographical regions, in particular in the Middle East region. Our stand echoes what all Arab countries called for in the Baghdad Declaration, adopted at the twenty-third Arab League Summit held in Baghdad in 2012, in particular in paragraphs 24

and 25 of the final declaration. Paragraph 25 welcomed the practical steps approved by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference in 2010 regarding the Helsinki conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, which was supposed to be held at the end of 2012, but unfortunately the conference was postponed due to unacceptable excuses, which we reject. The current conditions in the Middle East region provide strong reasons for holding this conference. The conference would have helped in promoting stability in the region.

Iraq attaches great importance to this forum, as was clearly stated by my Foreign Minister, Hoshyar Zebari, in his statement last year on the day Iraq assumed the presidency of this Conference. In line with that statement, I worked actively and intensively to bridge the gaps between the different positions of member States in a fully transparent manner that led to the drafting of the programme of work contained in document CD/1955; unfortunately, it did not win the consensus of member States for the reasons highlighted in my statement that was delivered at the plenary meeting on 13 August 2013.

Nevertheless, the desire and the aspiration of member States to achieve progress last year encouraged me to submit a draft decision on the establishment of an informal working group with a mandate to produce a programme of work robust in substance and progressive over time in implementation, which was adopted at the 1296th plenary meeting on 16 August 2013 (document CD/1956/Rev. 1). The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, described the decision in his statement to the Conference at the opening plenary of the 2014 session last month as “an innovative attempt to take modest steps forward”.

Mr. President, last but not least, my country supports your effort to renew the informal working group’s mandate and to reach an agreed substantive schedule of activities. Let me assure you that my delegation is prepared to support your work in every conceivable way.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Iraq for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I see that the list of speakers is exhausted now. Would any other delegation like to take the floor? I recognize the delegate of Algeria.

**Mr. Khelif** (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, the Algerian delegation wishes at the outset to join other speakers at the present and previous meetings in congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and to express our strong support for your efforts to move the work of the Conference forward.

The Algerian delegation has not hesitated to make all necessary contributions to break the stalemate that has beset the Conference in recent years, so that we can successfully implement the mandate assigned to the Conference, namely to conduct negotiations concerning legally binding international disarmament mechanisms and instruments. The Algerian delegation reaffirms its support for a comprehensive and balanced programme of work that addresses all security concerns of the member States of the Conference. We shall not repeat the positions of the Algerian delegation and Algeria with respect to the components of the programme, which are well known to all. We requested to take the floor today, Mr. President, merely to express our support for your approach.

(*spoke in French*)

Mr. President, we have taken the floor today merely to reiterate our support for the efforts you have been making, on the basis of the dual-track approach, to renew the informal working group on the programme of work and, in that respect, we await the circulation of the draft decision, which Algeria will certainly endorse. On the second point, which concerns the consultations you have been conducting regarding a schedule of activities for 2014, we would also like to express our support. We feel that your current efforts to seek the appointment of coordinators for the agenda items will prove most useful.

We have taken note of the document that you showed us earlier, setting out the various alternatives available for such a schedule of activities, and we feel that, alongside the efforts you are making to appoint coordinators, it might also be useful to hold informal

consultations in order to make sure that the future coordinators know on what basis they will need to work. In that respect, I can already tell you what the preferences of the Algerian delegation are. Our delegation is of the opinion that the schedule should take the form of an official decision by the Conference. The headings of the various items should be modelled on the agenda of the Conference and on the past practice of the Conference. We feel that starting from headings that the Conference has already approved could well facilitate the adoption of such a decision. I have in mind in particular the issue of fissile materials.

On a second point, we feel that the progress of the work of the coordinators should be recorded in a consensus report for adoption by the Conference. That would give us a clearer idea of the problems and help to situate them, and it might also enable us to work out elements of a possible consensus for the years ahead. Although this approach offers no guarantee of the adoption or opening of negotiations, it would at least allow us to tackle the different issues in depth and to express them in a consensus report.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Algeria for his contribution and for his kind words towards the Chair. We have taken good note of the points you have made and I feel certain that they will be discussed in the course of consultations with the regional groups and of our forthcoming consultations on the matter.

Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case. I will then ask the secretariat whether there are any announcements that need to be made.

**Mr. Fung** (Secretary of the Conference): I would just like to remind delegations of the work during the week ahead, which is going to be very intense in view of the meetings programmed for the high-level segment. We have already sent out reminders for Monday. On Monday the high-level segment will begin at 11 a.m., with an address by the President of the United Nations General Assembly. We will have four speakers that morning; in the afternoon, we will reconvene to listen to two speakers.

We will have meetings also on Tuesday. We have about seven speakers so far; that will be Tuesday morning. So far, there would not be any meeting on Tuesday afternoon, but as you know, the secretariat is at your disposal. We can programme a meeting at any time that you so wish. We will continue on Wednesday morning with three speakers on the list.

That is how the work of next week will proceed. Again, this programme will be posted on the website this week, and we are at your disposal should you wish to inscribe another dignitary on the list.

**The President:** Thank you very much, Mr. Fung. This meeting is adjourned.

*The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.*